



February 27, 2023
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Department of Corrections
SEIU District 1199 New England
Before the Finance Committee

In Support of H.B. No. 5673 AN ACT CONCERNING THE REFORMATION OF CERTAIN TAXES AND TAX EQUITY and SB 774: AN ACT ADJUSTING CERTAIN MARGINAL RATES FOR THE PERSONAL INCOME TAX AND ESTABLISHING A CAPITAL GAINS SURCHARGE

Good Afternoon Senator Fonfara and Representative Horn, my name is Dr. Leslie Bumpus and I am one of the lead dentists for the Department of Corrections. I'm a public health graduate student at UCONN and I also serve as an 1199 union delegate. I am here today to testify in support of House Bill 5673 and Senate Bill 774.

As a Dentist I treat infection, diagnose disease, and educate patients on oral health and disease prevention. I relieve people's pain and I restore missing teeth to attain a better quality of life. I am proud of the work I do, however, to address years of systemic understaffing of inmate medical services, expand access and improve the quality of healthcare and mental health care services for the incarcerated, \$20 million must be allocated to the DOC Health care line item and as a state we must allocate \$30 million for recruitment and retention of healthcare staff across all state agencies, including DOC.

Our patients are constitutionally entitled to receive adequate, timely, and equitable healthcare. They must be provided with annual dental exams, treatment plans must be followed, and decreasing health inequities are all crucial components of the job. With 10,000 incarcerated individuals and only 10 dentists serving this population, routine and preventative care cannot be performed. Inadequate staffing levels will always perpetuate health disparities.

We have the resources to do whatever it takes to recruit quality healthcare staff, but this is simply not being done. Access to healthcare is a human right that we must invest in, especially in one of the richest states in the country with an astronomical budget surplus. Together we have the resources to create a state where everyone has good healthcare to lead healthy lives. Lawmakers can fund a Recovery For All by passing a package that looks forward and provides relief to those who are struggling.

Thank you for your time.